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self for the re-making of Gaetano's musical education.

Mayr conversed some moments with young Donizetti, showed him the difficult side of his career, concealing the flowers and shewing him only the thorns, and when he saw the faith of his pupil was strong, that, far from discouraging him or causing him to waver, he promised himself to conquer every obstacle, he said the same as the father: "Be it so!"

Donizetti had an extraordinary aptitude for art. One can form an idea of it from the different essays made during his youth. Providence had endowed him with a fine organization, as well from a physical point of view as from an intellectual. He possessed a wonderful memory, and no less marvellous facility for learning. He was an assiduous student, and, what is more, he acquired very easily—too easily, perhaps. A profound observer would, from the first of the future composer's career, have discovered in him the brilliant and voluminous improvisatore who, later, in certain circumstances, proved prejudicial to the harmonist. Donizetti had, above all, a very marked talent for assimilation. With less talent, he would have been but a perpetual imitator. Happily, he possessed the sacred fire: with that, imitation is transformed, ennobled, elevated.

This faculty and versatility of mind prompted him to try all branches, and to succeed in all. He ran over the entire scale of art; there was not a step in the hierarchy of musical works that he left unessayed. *Nihil intentatum reliquit*, from the factious little farce to the great opera, from the motet to the mass; and when he had wearied all the contemporaneous poets with furnishing him words, he drew from Dante and set to music the song of Count Ugolino!

"*Quo non ascendum?*" Where shall I not ascend? might have been his motto. And, trusting in his star,—he did not say in his talent,—he advanced always with a step as resolute and firm as rapid in the path that he had chosen. Only, as this path presented itself to him bordered with the statues of the great masters who had preceded him, each time that he met upon his way one of these great men, he saluted him with respect, stopping to pay his tribute of homage and admiration, and from passing over in his memory their *chef d'œuvres* he took upon himself something of their style and manner. But he did it so gracefully! No matter. He was none the less the chameleon of musical art, the Proteus of the lyrical stage.

TO MUSIC.

Begin to charme, and as thou stroak'st mine cares
With thy enchantment, melt me into tears;
Thou let thy active hand sound o'er thy lyre,
And make my spirits frantick with the fire:
That done, sink down into a silv'ry straine
And make me smooth as balme and oile again.

—Herrick.

THE DEATH PAINTER.

"One fatal remembrance—one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes—
To which life nothing darker and brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, and affliction no sting!"

I need not now relate the causes, real or supposititious, of the dreadful curse that has for so many generations hung over all the males of our doomed family; it is enough to state that such a curse does exist, and that, in all probability, I, the last of my race, must also endure it. My father, by an early death, escaped the fearful fate; but if he had lived to his fortieth year—the age at which his progenitors were seized by the malady—he too must have become a maniac.

I remember when and how I first became acquainted with the terrible secret. On the death of my father I was removed from the school where all my early boyish years had been passed, and taken home. I was then about sixteen. Shortly after my return, my mother, by my guardian's advice, called me to the room which had been my father's study, and (after preparing my mind for the disclosure as well as her agitated feelings would permit) told me how the horrible truth—till then carefully concealed from her by my father—had, first, by delirious ravings in his last illness, afterwards, when he was no more, by his private papers, come to her knowledge; how several physicians (to whom, as the same papers proved, the case had been submitted) had unanimously decided that nothing could avert the catastrophe from him or his offspring; and how others, to whom she had since applied on my behalf, had concurred in a like opinion.

As she proceeded to recount all this, I saw, young though I was, how such an affliction would have pained her, or any other true and loving woman, more than the loss of the object of her affection; and mentally vowed that, however tempted, I would never marry.

My poor father! His moodiness and fits of gloom, my irritability and morbid sensitiveness, were now all explained.

As may be supposed, the intelligence of my future fate fell on me with the force of a thunderbolt, and for the time crushed me; but I grew by degrees accustomed to regard it more calmly, though the gloom and bitterness of my spirit naturally increased.

I had but one solace, I was fond of painting, and to that art I now entirely devoted myself, to the exclusion of nearly every other study; but my morbid tendencies did not even in this desert me, for the subjects I chose were all of a mystical, preternatural, horrible, or fantastic nature. If I studied the human form divine, it was only to reproduce it, distorted and rendered hideous, in the figures of demons, imps, gnomes, or other weird creatures of the poet's mind; if I spent whole days in transferring a few of the beauties of English landscape to canvas, I bestowed whole weeks on imaginary goblin oaks, haunted springs, or enchanted caverns; while, in reading, it was still the same—fiction, especially of a dreamy and improbable character, impressed me far more than truth, romance than reality. My "beautiful" was ever the unnatural—the reflection of my perturbed and disordered spirit.

Anatomy, of all the stepping stones to art, was my favorite study. In order to obtain better opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of it, I went to London, and entered myself as a student at one of the hospitals;

where I was continually to be found, either in the dissecting-rooms, or the dead-house, drawing from both natural and abnormal subjects, as if I had at last found the true end and object of my being.

While thus employed, a new fancy took possession of me, that of painting the dead in their shrouds, and at this I worked incessantly.

The students thought me mad, though, but for something in my manner which repelled curiosity and forbade insult, I have little doubt that I should have formed acquaintance, or become the *l'ut* of the class. As it was, I only inspired distrust and dread, and many a "first year's man" have I seen turn pale and retreat when he unthinkingly entered the dissecting room at an unusual hour, and found me alone with a "fresh subject."

The porter, moreover (who was too much at home with all kinds of horrors to be discomforted by anything), used to terrify the outpatients by pointing me out as the "young painter-gentleman as pulled the stiff-uns about more than any six of the other students."

My feelings at this period I can hardly analyse through the lapse of time; but I think that (when I could spare any from the object that engrossed, as it were, my whole being) I perceived a kind of savage exultation at the impression I produced, and endeavoured rather to increase than to diminish it.

At last I thought I had studied enough, and determined to prepare a picture for exhibition at the Royal Academy.

Edgar Poe's works about this time made their first appearance in England; their wild *diablerie* pleased me, and I decided on taking my subject from one of his tales or poems. After reading over and over again all I thought I should like to portray scenes from, I chose, as being least likely to revolt the lovers of the beautiful, and most suited to my own peculiar bias, the poem of "Lenore."

My picture was very simple; merely the young girl lying dead, and her lover mourning over her; but to it I devoted all the energy of my mind and body, every result of my study, and all the poetic feeling of my soul. It was my first labored composition; when completed, I sent it off, and sat myself down to wait patiently as I might for the result.

Oh! my mother, but for thee, in the intense excitement of those days of hope deferred, I must have maddened or died.

The answer came at length; I could not read it. I tossed it across the table to my mother, who was as powerless as myself to embody it in language, but who looked her congratulations when she had glanced over it. My picture was accepted and commended.

The day of the opening of the Exhibition arrived. I went to the rooms, which were already crowded. When I entered, at first I dare not approach my picture, fearing to be discovered as the artist, and taxed with the production of the scene; but after a while I overcame this ridiculous and puerile fancy, and made my way towards the part of the room where it was: this I had seen and marked on my first entrance. An old lady and gentleman, with a young lady, probably their daughter, were standing before it. As I came up, the young lady had just turned to her catalogue, and was reading,

"No. 233. Lenore. A. T. Ashleigh."

Then, leaning forward, she repeated (in a very musical voice, and with the most appropriate and appreciative tone I had ever heard) the lines I had caused to be painted on the dead-gold margin which, as the interior of the frame, surrounded the picture. They were:

"The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with hope that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild, for the dear child that should have been thy bride—
For her the fair and *debonnaire*, who now so lowly lies,
The life still there upon her hair, but not within her eyes,
The life upon her yellow hair, but not within her eyes."

When she had finished, she said, unconscious of the presence of any one but her parents, "Oh, is it not beautiful? Is it not natural? Almost too natural! Now I can understand the meaning of those beautiful lines of Byron. You know them, mamma, they begin,

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead."

Papa, shall you think me very foolish and romantic if I tell you that I should almost like to die young, and be mourned over like poor Lenore? It would be better—oh! how much better than living

"Till friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle the gems drop away."

"Nonsense, my child," said the half-frightened father, as if the possibility of such a thing as the death of one so young had never entered into his mind: "nonsense, you mustn't talk of dying! What can put such things into your head? Here, come away from that horrid picture."

Her mother, at the same moment, leant over her, and whispered something of which I caught the word "strangers."

The young lady raised her eyes to my face, and blushed slightly. I tried to look unconscious, but feeling that I could not succeed, I turned shortly on my heel and walked away. What had I to do with living youth and beauty?

The next morning I was at the Exhibition again, standing, through the whole day, as long and as often near my picture as I fancied I could without attracting attention—listening to the remarks that were made, and internally criticising the critiques of the persons who passed judgment upon it.

Occasionally I made a tour of the room, and on my return from one of these rambles found the party of the day before again examining my picture, and heard the young lady say, "I wonder what kind of man the artist is; whether he is young and good looking? Do you know him, papa?"

"No, my dear, I do not," was the answer. "He is a new man, he never exhibited here before: but is probably not very young. Few very young men ever paint anything worth exhibiting; or, when they do, venture to submit it to the committee of the Academy. Exhibitors are very seldom under thirty, or four-and-thirty, which I suppose you would call old; and sometimes a great deal older."

"Do you know, papa, that if I die I should like the same artist who painted that to take my likeness. I think you would wish to have something of the kind to remind you of me."

"My dear child, I really cannot allow you to entertain such gloomy thoughts. You must come from that picture: you quite put me out. I wish you had never seen it," replied the old gentleman. His daughter laughed gaily, and they passed on.

I continued to visit the Exhibition at intervals while it remained open, in hopes of seeing her again, and in this I was twice successful. For these opportunities I neglected everything. I was in love, and I knew it, but I did not attempt to control the feeling, as it was to me a new and brighter existence, and could not affect or annoy her; for she neither knew, nor was likely to know me, and was, besides, evidently of a rank that placed an insuperable bar between her and an unknown painter.

The season was over: the Exhibition closed, and I saw her no more, save "in my mind's eye," where her portrait lived with a reality that no art could equal.

Troubles now rose fast and heavy on my life. My mother died, and I was left alone in the world; to struggle through it as I might, for the little property we possessed was an annuity which terminated with her life, and left me after her death penniless.

I sold my picture, however, and thus provided for the present; but the future, how was I to meet that? I was not long left in doubt. Many persons saw my picture, which was now in the gallery of a well-known collector, and struck with the treatment of the subject, offered me commissions to paint those whom they loved and admired, and whom death had removed from their social or domestic circle.

I was thus in my element; my studies were of a class in society which I had never had open to me before, and which gave me opportunities of increasing the delicacy and refinement of my compositions. I became celebrated as a death-painter, and even took a delight in my *bizarre* occupation.

Three years passed away after the exhibition of my first picture, and I was beginning to thrive, when one day, or rather one night, for it was after dark, I was disturbed in a reverie about "the lady of my love" (whom I still loved, and had never forgotten, though I had not seen her since my mother's death) by a knock at the door of my chambers. I called out to the visitor to enter, and an *employee* of the Electric Telegraph Company presented himself, and handed me a printed form, to which these words were added in writing: "Lord—— will feel obliged, if Mr. Ashleigh will come without any delay to-night, if possible, to—— House, ——, and bring the implements of his art with him."

The address was that of a country house, a few miles to the north of London, and there remained still an hour to the departure of the last train from the King's Cross Station. I gave the messenger a reply, to the effect that I would come at once, and, hastily thrusting a few necessities into a carpet-bag, I packed up my easel, colors and brushes, hailed a Hansom, and hurried to the railway. The second bell was being rung as I was driven into the station-yard, and in five minutes more I had regularly begun my journey.

I endeavored, as the train proceeded, to guess at the reasons which could have induced Lord——, to whom I was personally unknown, to send for me in such haste, and at such a time in the evening; but in all my surmises, I never arrived at the truth.

It wanted half an hour to midnight as the train stopped at the——station. A servant was waiting for me with a gig, which I entered, and we proceeded at a rapid pace towards

——House. On the road I learnt the cause of my being sent for. Lady Ethel—the only daughter and sole heiress of the family of——, had been killed by a fall from her horse, which had taken fright at a railway train, become unmanageable, and finally thrown her, causing such injuries that her death, within a few hours, was the result.

After a quarter-of-an-hour's drive, we reached the house, where everything seemed in hopeless disorder, and where I, with difficulty, found any one to convey the intelligence of my arrival to the master.

Lady——, his wife, I heard, had been insensible ever since the fatal termination of the accident, while he himself had never left his daughter's room. When he knew of my arrival he sent to request that I would join him there, as he wished to say something to me. I went; following the messenger through long corridors and up massive staircases, till I thought we should never reach our journey's end: at last, my guide stopped, and, pointing to a door at the end of the passage, said, "His lordship is there." I know not how it was, or what gave rise to the sensation, but at these words I felt a sharp, thrilling chill run through me, such as one is supposed to feel when the spot of earth which is to contain his body after death is walked over by the unheeding and unconscious tread of the rambler in the churchyard.

The feeling increased to such an extent, as I neared the door, that I rather staggered than walked into the room.

Lord—— was standing by the fireplace, intently regarding the burning logs; when the servant announced me, he turned hastily round, and we met face to face. The recognition was mutual, and our minds simultaneously recurred to our first meeting at the opening of the Exhibition.

I could restrain myself no longer; but striding to the bed, put gently back the curtains that concealed the face of the dead. My worst presentiments were realised; it was the face of the only woman I ever had—or ever could have—loved. She seemed more like one asleep than one dead, but too lovely to be a creature of this finite world. Her face was infinitely calm.

"Death had left on it
Only the beautiful."

Such, indeed, might be the appearance of "an angel" sleeping: but nothing tainted with a mortal life could be so fair.

I buried my face in my hands, and for several moments could not control myself. At length, I raised my head. We had neither of us spoken a word as yet; but I saw that he had arrived at the secret of my love, and that, though in her lifetime it might have enraged him, he now felt for me as for a fellow mourner, for his voice trembled audibly, with emotion and pity, as he whispered, "Can you undertake it?" I bowed my head in assent, and the servant was desired to show me to my room.

Oh! what a night that was of terror and amazement. How I dwelt on the past dreams, the present realities, and the future blank of my existence.

How I recalled each action, each look of hers that I had noticed, and prayed for the day which seemed as though it would never come.

Again I pictured her as she was now with the slight bruise upon her temple, the only outward sign of the breath that had let out

life—the holy transfigured expression of her pale countenance; and

"The life still there upon her hair, but not within her eyes,
The life upon her yellow hair, but not within her eyes."

But the morrow came, at last; and the day after I had finished her head for my picture, and they had "buried her away, out of sight," but not before, unrestrained by her father, I had pressed a kiss, the only kiss I could ever remember to have given to any woman besides my mother, on her pale, calm brow; and again I was alone—more than ever alone in the world.

I am making a name; and Lord——, who would have been a father to me, for her sake, if I could have borne his presence, has done much to forward my interests; but I work without feeling; and but for one thing should scarcely love even my art: it is a copy which, with his permission, I made of her likeness when I had it at home to complete it. Occasionally, not often, for I do not need it, I raise the curtain which conceals it from vulgar eyes, and gaze at it long and lovingly. Sometimes I dream of what might have been, if she had lived; but I see the shadow of my fortieth year approaching; and remembering the scene in my father's study, I wake with a shudder, to say "It is better as it is." And her picture hangs there ever in my sight, and I whisper wild words to the senseless canvas—words of love and hope, that mortal ears may never hear; but though I love that picture, and should die without it, it is my fatal remembrance.

(From the London Musical World.)

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

Whatever may be the difference of opinion among musical critics with respect to the deserts of Verdi's last new opera, it must be generally admitted that in producing it with extraordinary splendor and efficiency, Mr. Gye has not only redeemed an important pledge to his subscribers and the public but added a new grand spectacular work to his repertoire which may prove attractive for a series of performances, both this year and in after times. That *Don Carlos* would ever appeal to the tastes of a certain number of those who frequent the Royal Italian Opera nobody previously acquainted with it believed for a moment. But although a special class among the supporters of this great establishment have just claims to consideration, there is no reason why a much larger class should be ignored in the preliminary arrangements. Musical connoisseurs will find and recognize in *Don Carlos*, amid much that is indifferent, much that is dull and heavy, some of the finest music that Verdi has composed. In the *finale* to what, in the Italian version of the opera, is the second act, he has successfully imitated the vast outline and elaborate details of Meyerbeer, and on a ground, too, where, among recent dramatic composers, Meyerbeer has stood alone and unapproached. The plan is as broad, the treatment as dramatic, the instrumentation as pompous, and the general effects as bold and imposing as in the *finales* to several of Meyerbeer's operas, which we need not stop to signalize by name; and if the *substratum* is not quite so original, that is almost the only point of inferiority to be laid to Signor Verdi's charge. In the materials for this large and noble *finale* the Italian composer has imitated Meyerbeer and repeated him-

self; but he has done both to such excellent purpose that the lovers of dramatic music will be only too pleased to welcome other performances of the same calibre from the same untiring pen. What French critics, in speaking of *Don Carlos*, call "Verdi's transformation," is all "moonshine." The music of the new opera is as pure "Verdi" as anything Verdi ever gave to the world. Strongly marked as is his peculiar individuality, his tendency to copy Meyerbeer in his more ambitious efforts has long been as notorious as that of M. Gounod himself, who, a wonderful master of small details, had never the ingenuity to sketch out, nor the requisite "long breath" to fill up such a *finale* as that which is beyond comparison the most remarkable musical feature of *Don Carlos*.

The prevalent gloom of the story of *Don Carlos*, derived almost exclusively from Schiller's famous dramatic poem, and setting history at naught after the same fashion, militates, and must always militate, against its popularity. Where the French librettists, the late M. Mry and M. Camille du Locle (a young writer endowed with an incontestable vein of poetry), have departed from Schiller's purely dramatic incidents, it is mostly to the disadvantage of the operatic version. Nothing, for instance, can be more absurd than the end, where *Don Carlos* is saved from condign punishment for high treason, and the suspicion of a still worse crime, by the interposition of a shadowy sort of monk, whom we are left to imagine is no other than the Emperor, Charles V. The father and predecessor on the throne of Philip II., the illustrious recluse of St. Just, who, though dead to the world is really not dead in the flesh, appears precisely at the nick of time to rescue his amiable grandson from the grasp of the Inquisition. "Mon fils," says the shadowy monk—

"Les douleurs de la terre
Viennent expirer en ce lieu,
La paix que votre cœur espère
Ne se trouve qu'aupres de Dieu ;"

and straightway drags *Don Carlos* into the cloister, shutting the grating after him, and leaving the King with the Grand Inquisitor in mute astonishment. As Charles V. died in 1558, and Philip did not marry Elizabeth de Valois until 1559, the impertinence of this imaginary incident will hardly be forgiven even by those who admit that operatic librettists enjoy wider privileges than mere poets, whose verse goes forth to the world without the extrinsic aids of melody and harmony. Another scene invented by Signor Verdi's French co-operators, and for which Schiller is in no way responsible, takes place in the Forest of Fontainebleau, where *Don Carlos*, forming part of the suite of the embassy from Spain, meets Elizabeth at a hunting party, woos her, and is accepted. The proposal of Philip himself, however, for the hand of the daughter of Henri II., follows immediately after, like a thunder-clap, leaving the young lovers in a state of despair from which they are never afterward rescued until the concluding incident of the opera puts an end to further conjecture—without hinting, however, what becomes of Elizabeth. But this and the miraculous interposition of Charles V. are expunged from the Italian version, the first act being bodily set aside, and *Don Carlos*, in the last, con-signed without ceremony to the officials of the Inquisition.

The rest of the opera is made up of the secret interviews between Don Carlos and the Queen;

the friendship between Don Carlos and the Marquis de Posa, whose political views and aspirations after the freedom of the Flemings, largely developed in Schiller's play, is here reduced to a *minimum*; the jealousy, suspicion, and retaliation of Philip II.; and the love for Don Carlos of the Princess Eboli, Elizabeth's first lady of honor, who finding her passion not reciprocated, betrays his secret to the King, and thus effects his ruin. The self-sacrifice made for his friend by the Marquis de Posa, who is shot by an officer of the Inquisition, is, to outward appearances, a purely political one, though really designed to get Don Carlos out of a still graver predicament than that of his espousing the cause of the discontented Flemings.

We can only fancy one composer making music out of such materials as are here contained, and keeping up the interest to the close. That composer, we need scarcely add, is the composer who with indomitable courage went to work, heart and brain, upon the most singular libretto of modern days. In turning the *Africaine* into an opera Meyerbeer had even a more difficult task than that of Signor Verdi; but we verily believe the composer of the *Huguenots* could have set anything to music with impunity. Signor Verdi, though a man of exceptional ability—all, indeed, but a man of genius—cannot lay claim to the extraordinary fertility of invention, the unlimited command of technical resources, the ever ardent enthusiasm that carried Meyerbeer safely through every problem he found it agreeable or expedient to solve. Nevertheless, *Don Carlos* is crowded with beauties of a more or less elevated order, and of these we propose, on a future occasion, to speak in detail. Signor Verdi has been terribly hampered by a tragedy which, to horrors with which he has always felt a pleasure in dealing, superadds politics, an unlawful love, an *auto da fe*, &c. In Paris, notwithstanding liberal curtailments, his *Don Carlos* took nearly five hours in performance; in London—with these curtailments accepted, added to the excision of the whole of Act I. and of the masque and ballet entitled *La Pèlerine*, supposed to take place in the gardens of the Queen at Valladolid, to say nothing of abbreviations of less consequence in the last two acts—it occupied, on the first night, little short of four hours. No doubt Mr. Costa will further exercise his judgment in reducing the opera to within reasonable limits. Signor Verdi's dramatic music bears cutting more easily than that of some composers who might be named—Meyerbeer himself, whose French operas have, without exception, been curtailed inevitably of their fair proportions, included; and we are of opinion that some three-quarters of an hour of music might yet be dispensed with, to the unquestionable advantage of what remains.

A more remarkable dramatic event than the first performance of *Don Carlos* at Covent Garden it would be difficult to recall. To single out one scene from the rest, and that the most important—the execution of the elaborately-constructed *finale* of Act II.—where the *auto da fe* is supposed to occur, uncomfortable indications of which are detected in the smoke that rises above the house-tops from the square of Nostra Dama d'Antocha; where the monks lead on their devoted victims, in the motley habiliments of the condemned, amid rejoicings from the ignorant and bigoted populace, and lugubrious chants from the ecclesiastic officials; where the Queen appears in state with her dames of